



GrowJobsCT

MANUFACTURING MAKES CT'S FUTURE

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Testimony of John Harrity
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Regarding Proposed Bill:

HB No. 6021 – AN ACT CONCERNING TEST BED TECHNOLOGIES.

Energy & Technology Committee

February 10, 2015

Senator Doyle, Representative Reed, members of the committee: my name is John Harrity. I serve as Director of GrowJobsCT, a coalition of business, labor and community groups, along with elected officials, that focuses on the need to sustain and expand manufacturing jobs in the state of Connecticut.

I am also President of the Connecticut State Council of Machinists, and serve as a member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Green Bank, though I am not representing them in my testimony today.

I am here today in support of Representative Morin's proposed bill: An Act Concerning Test Bed Technologies.

I would preface my remarks by saying that I am a great supporter of the job the Malloy Administration has done reviving the Connecticut economy, especially in manufacturing. I believe that they are doing everything they believe is reasonable and responsible to advance economic growth.

I also believe that there is a shortfall in vision and willingness to take risks in the lack of support for innovative technologies, especially in renewable energy products. Since renewable energy will be the growth engine for the new economy, and given the imperatives defined by climate change, if we are going to see manufacturing growth, we need to support emerging energy technologies in a more comprehensive manner.

By way of example, I would tell you briefly about Solar & Thermal Systems, a solar power generation company with an innovative and relatively inexpensive technology for generating electric power from sunlight. I believe one of their principals, Mr. Larry Black, testified earlier.

As Director of GrowJobsCT I worked with Mr. Black to get state funding to help this company get started. Our discussions with the state began under the Rell Administration and continued until about a year ago, when no further progress seemed possible.

I know the technology is buildable and advantageous because the CT Center for Advanced Technologies (CCAT), as well as other technical experts, examined the design and science behind the design, and endorsed it whole-heartedly.

But we were never able to get traction with the state government. We went long, long stretches waiting for answers from bureaucrats, only to finally get another negative response and suggestion to try another state agency.

We did get close – when the Department of Public Administration looked at funding a prototype/ first production model to go on a state building, with a commitment to purchase other units if the first worked as anticipated.

But eventually that plan was nixed.

We received a pattern of answers, which boiled down to three. Repeated in different ways:

1. "We are not going to finance the next 'Solyndra.'"
2. "We will give you funding when you raise enough private capital to build and test a prototype and enter the commercial market."
3. "Nobody will beat China at supplying solar technology."

I believe the last point is being dramatically challenged by the State of New York, which is investing \$750 million to assist Solar City build a facility that will eventually employ up to 3,000 people in the Buffalo area. Another major solar technology company is now talking with New York.

It is my opinion that this occurrence represents a missed opportunity for Connecticut, one that could be corrected by funding Mr. Black's company and providing support for companies like Solar & Thermal Systems.

If HB 6021 were law, Mr. Black's company would already be in business, and we would be exporting solar technology to other states and other countries.

I urge the legislature to pass HB 6021, AN ACT CONCERNING TEST BED TECHNOLOGIES.

Thank you.

John Harrity